

Message Text

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45

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EUR-12 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01

INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 AID-05 OMB-01 IO-10 PC-01 /083 W

----- 012763

R 131215Z FEB 75

FM AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 7700

C O N F I D E N T I A L BRASILIA 1095

FOL TEL RCVD FROM RIO DE JANEIRO SENT ACTION BRASILIA AND
SAO PAULO 12 FEB 75 BEING RPTD FOR YOUR INFO

QUOTE

RIO DEJANEIRO 0446

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, BR

SUBJECT: CATHOLIC CHURCH EFFORTS IN BEHALF OF POLITICAL PRISONERS

1. IN ADDITION TO THE GOVERNMENT AND THE MDB, THE
CATHOLIC CHURCH IS FEELING THE PRESSURE GENERATED
BY THE FAMILIES OF MISSING PERSONS, IN REACTION
TO THIS PRESSURE AS WELL AS IN MANIFESTATION OF
THE CHURCH'S OWN SOCIAL AND HUMANITARIAN CONCERNS,
CHURCH GROUPS IN THE RIO DE JANEIRO AREA ARE CONSIDERING
TWO PROPOSALS CONCERNING POLITICAL PRISONERS.

2. AS REPORTED RECENTLY IN THE PRESS, THE BRAZILIAN
NATIONAL COUNCIL OF BISHOPS (CNBB) IS STUDYING THE
POSSIBILITY OF ASKING THE GOVERNMENT FOR AMNESTY FOR
ALL BRAZILIAN POLITICAL PRISONERS, ACCORDING TO
CNBB SOURCES, IT IS UNCLEAR WHETHER THE CNBB WILL
ACTUALLY DECIDE TO MAKE SUCH A PROPOSAL.

3. IN A CONVERSATION HELD FEBRUARY 6, RIO DE JANEIRO'S
CARDINAL DOMEGENIO SALES TOLD POL OFF THAT HE IS ALSO
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WORKING ON AN EXTREMELY CLOSELY HELD PROPOSAL. THE

CARDINAL IS INTERESTED IN PENAL SYSTEM PROBLEMS AND HAS ESTABLISHED AN ARCHDIOCEASAN PENAL COMMISSION COMPOSED OF HIMSELF AND A NUMBER OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS, INCLUDING SECURITY AND PENAL AUTHORITIES. INSPIRED BY THE POPE'S CALL FOR AMNESTY FOR POLITICAL PRISONERS DURING THIS HOLY YEAR, THIS PENAL COMMISSION INTENDS TO PROPOSE THAT THE GEISEL GOVERNMENT REDUCE THE SENTENCES OF BRAZILIAN POLITICAL PRISONERS. THE CARDINAL EXPLAINED THAT PERSONS CONVICTED UNDER NATIONAL SECURITY LEGISLATION DO NOT BENEFIT FROM THE ANNUAL PARDONS AND REDUCTIONS IN SENTENCES WHICH THE PRESIDENT DECREES AT THE END OF EVERY YEAR, THE CARDINAL CHARACTERIZED THIS PROPOSAL AS A REQUEST FOR INDULGENCE RATHER THAN ABSOLUTION AND BELIEVES THAT IT HAS A BETTER CHANCE OF BEING ACCEPTED BY THE GEISEL GOVERNMENT FOR SEVERAL REASONS. IN THE FIRST PLACE, THE CNBB AND THE GOVERNMENT HAVE SEVERAL AREAS OF FRICTION WHEREAS HIS PERSONAL RELATIONS WITH FALCAO, GOLBERY AND GEISEL ARE EXCELLENT, SECONDLY, THE PENAL COMMISSION IS NOT SIMPLY ECCLESIASTICAL BUT INCLUDES RESPONSIBLE LOCAL GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS. FINALLY, THE CARDINAL BELIEVES THAT THE GEISEL GOVERNMENT IS SIMPLY NOT STRONG ENOUGH (VIS-A-VIS) THE HARD LINERS) TO BE ABLE TO DECREE AMNESTY FOR POLITICAL PRISONERS EVEN IF IT SO DESIRED.

4. CARDINAL SALES HAD MEANT TO DISCUSS THE PROPOSAL WITH MINISTER OF JUSTICE FALCAO ON FEBRUARY 6 IN AN ATTEMPT TO SELL HIM ON THE IDEA BUT FOUND THAT THE MINISTER WAS NOT IN BRASILIA. HE INTENDS TO RAISE IT WITH FALCAO AFTER CARNIVAL.

5. IN ADDITION TO THE PROPOSAL, WHICH IS ALREADY TYPED AND SIGNED, THE PENAL COMMISSION HAS DRAFTED A PROPOSED ENABLING DECREE. THE CARDINAL WILL ALSO SUGGEST THAT THE GOVERNMENT CONSIDER ANNOUNCING THIS MEASURE ON MARCH 31 THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE REVOLUTION.

6. MEMCON FOLLOWS.

MILLER
UNQUOTE
CRIMMINS

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